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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIJING 001484

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [EAID](#) [AF](#) [PK](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: AFM CUI TIANKAI ATTEMPTS TO BROKER BETTER TIES
BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

Classified By: External Unit Chief Edgard Kagan.
Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

1. (C) Assistant Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai traveled to Afghanistan and Pakistan February 6-9 in an effort to broker better relations between the two countries in light of recent tensions, according to an MFA official. While in Afghanistan, Cui negotiated an agreement to improve the security situation of Chinese workers in Afghanistan, including the establishment of a "hot line" between Afghanistan's Ministry of Defense and the Chinese Embassy in Kabul as well as opening a new line of communication between NATO and the Chinese Embassy. Cui urged Afghanistan to practice "quiet diplomacy" by keeping differences it has with Pakistan out of the media. In a separate meeting, Afghanistan's Ambassador to China told the DCM that Cui was noncommittal in response to requests for PRC assistance from the Afghan Government and from the NATO's International Security Assistance Force Deputy Commander. While in Pakistan, AFM Cui heard complaints from Pakistan government officials that Afghanistan needs to make greater contributions to securing the border from extremist infiltrations. End Summary.

Second Round of Consultations with Afghanistan

2. (C) Assistant Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai traveled to Afghanistan February 6-7 and Pakistan February 7-9 to encourage the two countries to cooperate more closely on security issues and to hold bilateral discussions. The main purpose of Cui's visit to these two countries was to attempt to broker better relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan in light of the increasing tension between the two, MFA Asian Department Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh Division Deputy Director Zhao Lijian told poloff during a March 2 meeting. Noting that he had been part of the PRC delegation, Zhao said that Cui had met with Vice President Ahmad Zia Masood, National Security Advisor Zalamy Rassoul, Minister of Foreign Affairs Rangin Dadfar Spanta and Minister of Defense Abdul Rahim Wardak. This second round of diplomatic consultations between China and Afghanistan followed talks in 2005. During Cui's visit, Afghanistan's Foreign Minister agreed to visit China in 2007.

Improving Security for Chinese Workers in Afghanistan

13. (C) During AFM Cui's visit, China and Afghanistan reached an agreement to improve the security afforded to Chinese engineers and workers stationed in Afghanistan. In June 2004 eleven workers were killed in terrorists' attacks and in December 2006 Chinese construction sites were attacked three times, Zhao stated. Currently there are 500 Chinese employed in reconstruction projects in Afghanistan. Beijing can not encourage Chinese companies to participate in Afghanistan reconstruction projects if it places Chinese citizens at risk, Zhao said. Under the agreement, Beijing will provide detailed information on the locations, number of employees and conditions of its construction sites in Afghanistan. For its part, Kabul will consider the location of Chinese construction sites when deploying its security forces. AFM Cui and Defense Minister Wardak agreed to establish a "hot line" between China's military attache stationed in Kabul and the Assistant Defense Minister to be used when Chinese construction firms are threatened or under attack by extremists. This will strengthen the communication between China and Afghanistan and will augment the already existent "hot line" between Afghanistan's Ministry of the Interior and the Chinese Embassy in Kabul.

14. (C) AFM Cui also met with NATO's International Security Assistance Force Deputy Commander. AFM Cui proposed that NATO and the Chinese Embassy establish a

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dialogue mechanism for security purposes and NATO responded positively to the proposal, according to Zhan. Ambassador Daan Everts, NATO's Senior Civilian Representative to Afghanistan, has agreed to serve as the NATO point of contact for the Chinese Embassy. Zhao said that Everts and China's Ambassador have since met to discuss this communication channel.

Afghanistan Should Use "Quiet Diplomacy" with Pakistan

15. (C) AFM Cui praised the Afghanistan Government's achievements in its reconstruction efforts and in improving security in the country. Cui reminded Kabul that both Afghanistan and Pakistan are victims of terror and need to cooperate with each other to fight terrorism in a more effective manner. Zhao said Cui warned his Afghan interlocutors that fighting between Afghanistan and Pakistan will only aid the terrorists. He advised the Afghanistan government to communicate better with Pakistan on bilateral issues, to use "quiet diplomacy" and to avoid publicizing differences in the media.

Afghanistan Believes Pakistan is Aiding the Taliban

16. (C) Cui's Afghanistan interlocutors all delivered the same message, according to Zhan, espousing that Afghanistan is no threat to Pakistan and wants to build "brotherly" relations. National Security Advisor Rassoul complained to AFM Cui that he believes Pakistan is helping the Taliban to regroup. Rassoul claims that the Taliban has rebuilt training camps in the Pashtun tribal areas and that the Taliban has reconstructed its headquarters in Quetta. Rassoul urged China to use its influence with Pakistan to get Islamabad to do more to address the Taliban issue. Afghanistan has great confidence in China because among all of Afghanistan's neighbors it is the only country never to have invaded Afghanistan, Zhao

stated.

¶7. (C) Cui replied that Pakistan is constrained in its fight against terrorism because of its very large Pashtun population. Pakistan has never had effective control over the border region and this is a historical problem that has existed for over 200 years. Cui told his interlocutors that China does think the Pakistan government is aiding or supporting the Taliban.

Afghanistan Requests Assistance From China

¶8. (C) Afghanistan Ambassador to China Eklil Ahmad Hakimi provided a brief readout to the DCM on February 12 on Cui's visit to Kabul. Hakimi said that Cui met with NATO's International Security Assistance Force Deputy Commander who asked Cui whether China would be willing to contribute security assistance to ISAF in Afghanistan. In a separate meeting, Afghanistan Defense Minister Rahim Wardak also asked Cui for Chinese assistance. Cui was noncommittal in response to both requests, according to Hakimi.

Pakistan Wants Greater Afghan Participation

¶9. (C) During his February 7-9 visit to Pakistan, Cui met with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, Foreign Secretary Khurshid M. Kasuri and foreign ministry

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officials responsible for Asia and the Pacific, and United Nations and Arms Control. Cui's Pakistan interlocutors stated that Pakistan is trying to improve communications with Afghanistan. Zhao said that Pakistan officials did not deny that there are people supportive of the Taliban in the border region but strongly insisted that the government stands firm in its fight against the Taliban. Prime Minister Aziz told AFM Cui that Pakistan participates in the war against terror not to please other countries but to safeguard its own national interests and to prevent the "Talibanization" of Pakistan. Cui's Pakistani

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interlocutors insisted that Islamabad and Kabul share equally the responsibility for stopping Taliban infiltrations into each other's territory. Currently, Pakistan has 1000 manned posts along the border, while Afghanistan has only 100 manned posts. Pakistan will support the Afghanistan's Security Forces and the International Security Assistance Force's efforts to crush any Taliban offensive launched this spring. Pakistan also insists that the international community needs to provide Afghanistan with a substantial economic program, similar to the Marshall Plan, and needs to help Afghanistan build its security forces.

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